



## H.R. 5531 – Next Generation Radiation Screening Act of 2008

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### FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 5531 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Peter King (R-NY) on March 5, 2008. The House Committee on Homeland Security ordered the bill to be reported, as amended, by voice vote on July 22, 2008.

H.R. 5531 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 29, 2008.

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### SUMMARY

This bill requires the Commissioner of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Director of the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) to enter into an agreement regarding minimum functionality standards for Advanced Spectroscopic Portals (ASPs) used by CBP. Within 60 days of enactment, CBP and DNDO must provide Congress with their memorandum of understanding.

H.R. 5531 directs the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the National Academies, to develop metrics that demonstrate any increased operational effectiveness of deploying ASPs in Primary and Secondary Screening sites. This legislation sets out certain criteria for these metrics, including a cost-benefit analysis.

The bill authorizes the appropriation of \$40 million for fiscal year 2009 and such sums as may be necessary for subsequent years for the Securing the Cities Initiative.

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### BACKGROUND

This bill establishes criteria for Advanced Spectroscopic Portals. These panel-like devices are used by Customs and Border Protection to screen people, cars, trucks and containers for illicit radioactive materials at some of the more than 600 ports of entry into the United States. ASP technology offers the potential to provide increased detection capabilities, while cutting down on the number of “false alarms”.

The Department of Homeland Security has deployed radiation detectors at points of entry since 2003. Such deployment is part of a larger strategy to combat the threat of nuclear terrorism within the United States. It is widely understood that the detonation of an improvised nuclear weapon or a radiological dispersion device would have catastrophic consequences for the American public and economy.

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### COST

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that that implementing H.R. 5983 “would cost about \$180 million over the 2009-2013 period, subject to appropriation of the authorized amounts.” [Full CBO Cost Estimate](#).

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### STAFF CONTACT

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